

2006/2007 California State Budget and Agriculture/ 02-09-06

Many of you responded with positive feedback on the first message we sent out last month. I was pleased to hear your comments and want to encourage you to stay in touch on important issues.

There has been a lot going on over the last several weeks, with Governor Schwarzenegger's state of the state address, his Strategic Growth Plan, and then his proposed budget for 2006/2007. There is good news for agriculture in the governor's program.

The budget includes \$7.2 million to address emerging threats to California's food supply, the economy, natural resources and public health. Those threats include avian influenza and foot-and-mouth disease. The appropriation would allow us to hire 37 positions: people who would help us bolster our preparedness for an agricultural emergency. The program would include staffing and support for a CDFA emergency operations center. It is important to remember that an emergency involving our food supply could strike at a number of places along the farm-to-fork continuum, and could involve foods ranging from animal products to fruits and nuts.

The governor's budget also includes \$630,000 for two pilot projects that will help to restore some services to our border inspection stations. One project will provide new positions to allow for two years of consistent inspections of private vehicles at the Needles station. The other pilot project, also at Needles, will compare bills of lading in trucks coming through the station to products actually being carried on-board. The Board of Equalization is reimbursing us, with the goal being to make sure proper state taxes are being paid on those products.

In addition, Governor Schwarzenegger has set aside \$174,000 for CDFA to develop hydrogen fuel standards, which are essential as we move closer to the governor's vision of a Hydrogen Highway: <http://hydrogenhighway.ca.gov/>.



Plant Quarantine Inspectors at the Needles station examine commercial citrus for exotic fruit fly larvae. photo: g. leslie/cdfa

For more information on the CDFA budget, the following link will take you to an informative page at the Department of Finance: <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/StateAgencyBudgets/8000/8570/departments.html>.

It is the second consecutive year with encouraging budget news. Last year, we received permanent funding of the joint CDFA/USDA Mediterranean Fruit Fly Preventive Release Program. The project releases hundreds of millions of sterile Medflies each week over the Los Angeles Basin and has worked wonders in reducing the number of infestations over the last 10 years. Prior to last year, we were forced to fight for funding annually for this crucial, core activity. If you would like more information on the program, here is a link on CDFA's Web site that may be helpful: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdep/prpinfo/> .

The budget is intended to work in tandem with Governor Schwarzenegger's Strategic Growth Plan to create opportunities for agriculture. The governor's plan will benefit flood control, the levee system and the water supply. The investment of \$35 billion for these activities includes \$6 billion over the next 10 years. This project is critical. California's infrastructure was built for 25 million people. Our current population is approximately 37 million. By 2025, it is projected that the population will be 46 million. We don't even have the infrastructure to meet the needs of today, so if we don't act now we will never meet the needs of tomorrow.

Recently, I was pleased to discuss these issues with local leaders in Bakersfield, at a conference known as Valley CAN, or Clean Air Now. Valley CAN is a public-private partnership working together in the Central Valley to achieve clean air goals while maintaining an atmosphere that is productive to commerce and community development. We salute Valley CAN for its initiative, and for the progress already made in the young organization's second year. Here is a link to the group's Web site: <http://www.valley-can.org/> .

As you can see, these are exciting times in Sacramento and throughout California. I am confident that agriculture will continue to benefit.



CDFA participants at the Valley CAN conference: (L-R) Steve Shaffer, Director, Office of Agriculture & Environmental Stewardship; Matt Summers, Air Resources Engineer; and Secretary Kawamura.
photo: s. lyle/cdfa

Thank you for your support and don't hesitate to contact my office with any questions or comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A.G. Kawamura".

A.G. Kawamura
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